

CLAIMS

5 WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. (Currently amended) A method for providing a wireless telephone service, the method comprising:

10 providing a dedicated programmable wireless telecommunication switch coupled to a public switched telephone network, a voice mail server, and a billing server;

providing a wireless handset having a telephone number associated with it, the handset being capable of telephonic communication with the dedicated switch, and of placing and receiving telephone calls through ~~the switch to and from a secured list of~~ telephone numbers ~~on a secured list of telephone numbers programmed in the dedicated switch;~~

15 providing at least two billing accounts associated with the telephone number of the handset to provide substantial control over the cost of non-essential usage and provide substantially inexhaustible emergency communication "safety net", the accounts comprising a secured account having a password and the telephone numbers of the secured list associated with it, and a dependent account having a password associated with it;

20 detecting the telephone number of a caller of an incoming call to the handset, and if none is detected, then prompting the caller to provide a password;

detecting the telephone number being called in an outbound call from the handset;

25 debiting the secured account for completed incoming calls to the handset in which the detected number of the caller is on the secured list, or in which the caller provides the password of the secured account, and for completed calls from the handset to telephone numbers on the secured list; ~~[[and,]]~~

30 debiting the dependent account for completed incoming calls to the handset in which detected number of the caller is not on the secured list, or in which the caller does not provide the password of the secured account, and for completed outgoing calls from the handset to numbers that are not on the secured list; ~~and~~

detecting credit in at least one of the secured account and the dependent account in response to at least one of the incoming call to the handset or the outbound call from the handset.

2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein a dependent list of telephone numbers is programmed in the switch, and further comprising:

providing an appropriate level of substantially free credit to complete the at least one of the incoming call to the handset or the outbound call from the handset partially responsive to detection of insufficient credit;

debiting for completed incoming and outgoing calls to and from the handset that are to and from telephone numbers that are on the dependent list; and

connecting to emergency numbers regardless of availability of the credit in the dependent account.

3. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the handset is capable of making calls only to telephone numbers that are on the secured or the dependent lists; and wherein the step of providing an appropriate level of substantially free credit comprises communicating advertisement messages to replenish the credit of at least one of the secured and the dependent accounts.

4. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the handset is capable of receiving calls only to telephone numbers that are on the secured or the dependent lists and repeatedly communicates a message at selected intervals to a user and upon failure of the user to acknowledge receipt of the message, the message is communicated to another user on a service list.

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the telephone number of an incoming caller corresponds to a number on the secured list, or the caller provides the secured account password, and further comprising:

determining whether the credit is available in the secured account;

if the credit is not available in the secured account, providing the caller with an option of

recording a voice mail to ~~the handset user~~ a user on the voice mail server;

if the credit is available in the secured account; determining whether the user is available to take the call;

if the user is not available to take the call, providing the caller with an option of recording a voice mail to the user on the mail server;

if the user is available to take the call,

connecting the call to the handset;

metering the length of the call; and,
debiting the secured account for the call.

6. (Currently amended) The method of claim 5, ~~wherein credit is not available in the secured account, and~~ further comprising: providing the caller with an alternative option of adding
5 credit to the at least one of the secured account and the dependent account in response to listening to a recorded advertising message.

7. (Currently amended) The method of claim 5, wherein the caller leaves a voice mail to the user on the voice mail server, and wherein the dedicated switch is further coupled to [[the]]
internet, and further comprising:

10 recording the voice mail as or converting it to a sound file; and,
transmitting the sound file to an e-mail address of the user.

8. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the telephone of an incoming caller corresponds to a number of the dependent list, and further comprising:

determining whether the credit is available in the dependent account;

15 if the credit is not available in the dependent account, providing the caller with an option of recording a voice mail to ~~the handset user~~ a user on the voice mail server;

if the credit is available in the dependent account, determining whether the user is available to take the call;

20 if the user is not available to take the call, providing the caller with an option of recording a voice mail to the user on the voice mail server;

if the user is available to take the call,
connecting the call to the handset;
metering the length of the call; and,
debiting the dependent account for the call.

25 9. (Original) The method of claim 8, the caller leaves a voice mail to the user on the voice mail server, and wherein the dedicated switch is further coupled to the internet, and further comprising:

recording the voice mail as or converting it to a sound file; and,
transmitting the sound file to an e-mail address of the user.

30 10. (Currently amended) The method of claim 8, wherein the credit is not available in the dependent account, and further comprising:

providing the caller with an alternative option of adding the credit in the dependent account by listening to a recorded advertising message.

11. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2, wherein ~~the user~~ a user of the handset attempts to make an outgoing call, and wherein the credit is not available in either the dependant
5 or the secured accounts, further comprising:

providing the user with an option of adding credit to either dependent or secured by listening to a recorded advertising message.

12. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing a third billing account associated with the telephone of the handset, the third
10 account comprising an alert service account and having associated with it a password and an alert service list of telephone numbers in the switch;

calling ~~the user of the handset~~ a user at the telephone number thereof at selected times and selected intervals;

if the user answers the call, playing or displaying a first pre-recorded message to the user
15 ~~of the handset~~;

prompting the user to acknowledge receipt of the message;

if the user does not answer the call or does not acknowledge receipt of message within a selected period of time, initiating an escalation process, comprising:

repeating the call to the user at selected intervals thereafter;

20 sequentially calling the telephone numbers on the alert service list;

if a respondent at one of the numbers on the alert service list answers the call, playing or displaying a second pre-recorded message identifying the user, and stating that the user failed to acknowledge receipt of the first message;

prompting the respondent to acknowledge receipt of the second message; and,

25 continuously repeating the preceding steps until receipt of the first or the second message is acknowledged.

13. (Currently amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the first message comprises a reminder to take or administer medications and if the user does not acknowledge, others concerned with the user will be notified of that.

30 14. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the dedicated switch is further coupled to [[the]]internet, and further comprising:

providing an interactive web page on the internet through which a customer or a customer's representative can obtain information regarding the customer's account and program selected features of the dedicated switch that relate to the customer's account;

logging the customer or customer's representative onto the web page;

prompting the customer or customer's representative for the telephone number of the handset;

if the customer or customer's representative provides the telephone number of the handset, prompting the customer or customer's representative for the password of the secured account or the dependent account; and,

if the customer or customer's representative provides the password of the secured account or the dependent account, providing the customer or customer's representative with the status of the secured account or the dependent account and enabling the customer or customer's representative to modify the secured list of telephone numbers online.

15. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the dedicated switch is further coupled to [[the]]internet, and further comprising:

providing an interactive web page on the internet through which a customer or a customer's representative can obtain information regarding the customer's account and selected features of the dedicated switch that relate to the customer's account;

logging the customer or customer's representative onto the web page;

prompting the customer or customer's representative for the telephone number of the handset;

if the customer or customer's representative provides the telephone of the hand-set, prompting the customer or customer's representative for the password of the secured account or the dependent account; and,

if the customer or customer's representative provides the password of the secured account or the dependent account, providing the customer or customer's representative with the status of the secured account or the dependent account and enabling the customer to modify the secured list or the dependent list of telephone numbers online.

16. (Currently amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the dedicated switch is further coupled to [[the]]internet, and further comprising:

providing an interactive web page on the internet through which a customer or a customer's representative can obtain the customer's account and program selected features of the dedicated switch that relate to the customer's account;

logging the customer or the customer's representative onto the web page;

prompting the customer or customer's representative for the telephone number of the handset;

if the customer or customer's provides telephone number of the handset, prompting the customer for the password of the alert service account; and,

if the customer provides the password of the alert account, providing the customer with the status of the alert service account and enabling the customer to the times and intervals of the calls to the handset-user, the message played or displayed to the user, the selected intervals at which repeat calls to the user are made, and the telephone numbers of the alert service list online.

17. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the telephone of the secured list includes a home location telephone number provided by a fixed wire telephone provider, and further comprising:

determining whether the telephone number of the caller of an incoming call to the handset corresponds to a telephone number of the secured list;

if the telephone number of the caller corresponds to a telephone number of the secured list,

connecting the call to the handset;

metering the length of the call; and,

charging the cost of the call to the location number through the fixed wire provider.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, further comprising:

providing the caller with an option of charging the cost of the call to the home location number through the fixed wire provider.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18, further comprising:

prompting the caller for the secured account password.

20. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the telephone number of the secured list includes a home location telephone number provided by a fixed wire telephone provider, and further comprising:

determining whether a telephone number being called by the handset corresponds to a number on the secured list;

if the telephone number being called corresponds to a telephone number of the secured list,

5 connecting the call;
metering the length of the call; and,
charging the cost of the call to the home location number through the fixed wire provider.

21. (Original) The method of claim 20, further comprising:

10 providing the caller with an option of charging the cost of the call to the home location number through the fixed wire provider.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, further comprising:

prompting the user for the dependent account password.